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Assessing Geotouristic Potentials for Developing Sustainable Tourism (A case Study in Tabriz' Eynali Mountain)

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ABSTRACT--*Geotourism is one of the newest concepts within tourism studies today. The popularity of geotourism has likewise grown rapidly over the past few decades. This rapidly growing popularity and the growing body of research on geotourism create the need for a comprehensive review of existing literature on the subject. Geotourism is a kind of tourism in natural areas which pays a special attention to geology and landscapes and also provides background for tourism in geosites and protecting natural diversity and through protection and learning helps the concept of geology science. The present study aims to investigate the effects of geomorphologic phenomena and processes of the region on tourists and geotourisms. The study is descriptive, analytical and field research in method and to collect data library research, documents, maps and instruments such as questionnaire, interview and imaging have been used. Comanescu method used to evaluate the standards of tourism and geomorphologic productivity with the purpose of recognizing geotourist potentials. According to this method scientific, cultural, economic, management and aesthetic values are investigated. The findings out of this study showed that Einali had high potential in tourism, but due to the limitations of this region, tourists neglect it. In the current study, data collected based on the standards of Comanescu method and the questionnaires filled out by geomorphology researchers, scientific professors, PhD students of geomorphology major and also the residents of that region. Among the landforms selected as geosites to attract tourists, Einali Summit gained the maximum tourism points among other geotourist phenomena, due to the high aesthetic value rather than other geomorphosites of Einali. This area attracts many tourists due to plant and animal diversity in spring.*

Key words*--geotourism, geomorphosites, Comanescu Method, Einali*

I. INTRODUCTION

Geotourism is a new phenomenon which was introduced in tourism literature in last two decades and received global acceptance (Dowling & New Some 2006). Geotourism is type of tourism in natural areas which has special attention to geology and landscapes and provides a tourism opportunity in geosites and protection of terrestrial diversity and helps in gaining knowledge of earth science through conservation and learning.

Achiving to this aim has been realized through visiting geologic phenomenons using sightseeing routes and places with geological attractions, tourism and supportive measures like visiting geosites (Newsome & Dowlong, 2010).

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Geotourism, in addition to creating tourism opportunity with higher quality, provides other forms of tourism with potential of regeneration and establishment as well as strengthening the distinct natural and cultural characteristics of tourism destinations increasingly (Stueve et al., 2002). Geotourism is a bilateral approach, i.e protective and scientific in relation with identifying geomorphosites which has been delineated by the aim of developing sustainability and also protecting geology heritage. The mountain of Eynali is one of regions which has a significant potential in attracting tourist, due to it's geotouristic attractions diversity. In the present research, by field reviews the ability of 5 famous and selected geomorphosites of tourists are detected, data and ability of any geomorphosite are evaluated through questionnaire based on Comanescu method. The results of research show that, among the evaluated geomorphosites, the peak of Eynali with 86 points and spring of kahlek with 46 points was dedicated to have maximum and minimum score in comparing with other ones. Rating each geomorphosite will provide significant role in planning which suits with geotouristic potentials of each region and investing in order to attract tourists.

Key words: Geomorposite, Geotourism, Comanescu Method, Eynali Mountain

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Geotourism is a new phenomenon which was introduced in tourism literature in last two decades and received Global acceptance (Dowling & New Some 2006). Geotourism is type of tourism in natural areas which has special attention to geology and landscapes and provides tourism field in geosites and protects terrestrial diversity and helps Earth science throug protecting and learning.

Accessing to this aim, comes true through visiting geologic phenomenon, Sightfull routes and Places with Geogical attractions, Geosites, touring and taking supportive actions in order to support proctor centers (Newsome & Dowling, 2010).Geotourism, in addition to creating tourism opportunity with higher quality, provides other forms of tourism with ability of regeneration and establishment and improves exclusive and distinct natural and cultural characteristics of tourism destinations more than past (Stueve et al., 2002). Nowadays, the economic value of tourism is to some extent which is called as an industry, the significance of Geomorphosites in improving economic state of any country seems to be undeniable and is considered as a main solution to enhance income and reduce poverty especially in developing countries.

III. LOCATION OF EYNALI MOUNTAIN

On north section of Tabriz city, there are red soil mountain ranges, the Sorkhab Mountain, so-called Eynali Mountain that it's highest point is 1960m high from sea level. Eynali Mountain is part of Moro Mountains (development & reconstruction organization of Un-Ebn-Ali)

IV. INTRODUCING TOURISM ATTRACTIONS OF TABRIZ'S EYNALI

The main tourism regions of Eynali include historical monument of Un-Ebn-Ali shrine, memorial of unknown martyrs, Eynali peak, Kahlec spring, Tarlan spring, Davachi spring, Dash Kasanlar spring, Aji Chai river, Ilan Uchanlar valley, Dash Kasanlar valley, Gholbehzan valley, Shahriar sculpture, printed image of Tabriz

by Sharden Sayyah in Safavi era from Eynali mountain, ostrich farm, Dagh Goli lake, El Daghi park, Yaran vallay, Eynali wildlife park, Gatar Ghayalar route, Telecabine, forestry and floriculture of Eynali mountain by area of 5612h, restaurant, pergolas, sport equipments in Eynali route, wind tourbines, paving route, 4km up to the peak and other recreational and amenities have enhanced the beauty of this promenade.

Introducing geomorphosites of Tabriz Eynali mountain (Un-Ebn-Ali)

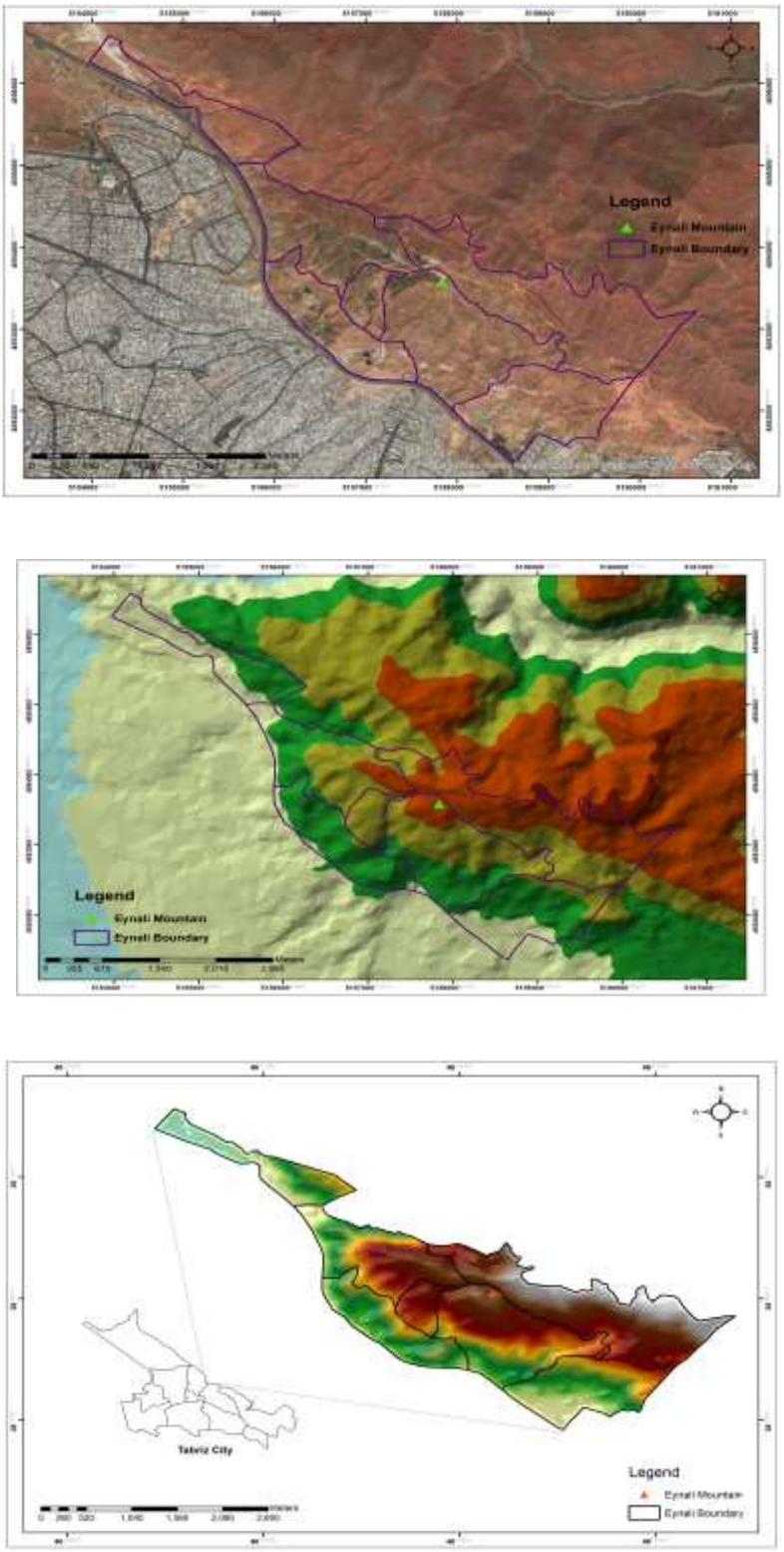

Figure 1: Eynali peak location in East Azarbyjan of Iran

1. **Un-Ebn-Ali Shrine monument:** A monument has been constructed on top of the mountain, which, was originally a mosque and it's history goes backs to Ilkhanian era (9 H century). This construction is called Eynali-Zeynal or Eynali and/or Un-Ebn-Ali monument. Based on narration, this monument is the tomb of sons of ImamAli, i.e Un-Eb-Ali and Zeyd-Ebn-Ali.

2. Eynali peak**:** This red soil peak is located on $46^{\circ}\ 19'\ 45''$ eastern longitude and $38^{\circ}\ 06'\ 06''$ northern latitude on north of Tabriz, which it is 1800m high from sea level and Every year accepts more tourists from different regions.

3. Tarlan spring: Tarlan spring is more famous than other springs of Eynali mountain. It is closest spring to the hill and is located on north side. It always flows and it's water is so pure.

4. Kahlek spring**:** Kahlek spring is located in the first valley on the point of Aji Chai river with willow trees is considered as a suitable location for resting of climbers.

5. Ilan Uchan **Valley:** This valley is located on south side of the peak. In one side, it is surrounded by tall rocks which is one reason for its special attraction. These rocks are the practice location of climbers and rock climbers.

Ilan Uchan Valley of Eynali

A view of Eynali Mountain

A sample of rocks and valleys of Eynali

Tarlan spring of Eynali

Un-Ebn-Ali Shrine

Figure 2: Samples of Eynali Mountain's geomorphosites.

V. METHODOLOGY

At first, to conduct research, the library studies and data are used in order to analyze geomorphosites, background study and then by help of field studies and questionnaire analysis geomorphosites evaluated.

In the present research, we tried to evaluate geotouristic potentials of mountainous region through field studies and questionnaires based on Comanescu method (2011).

In general, this method is based on 5 values (scientific, aesthetics, cultural, economic and managerial) which score of any value is obtained based on some subcriteria and averages (Shayan et al., 1392).

Evaluation of geomorphosites based on Comanescu method

In the present research based on conducted studies on Eynali Mountain, the importance of evaluation of any geomorphosites is identified and calculated by averaging 5 value-based questionnaires (Table 1).

Table 1: Evalutaion of Eynali mountain's geomorphosites based on Comanescu method

Geomorphosites	Kahlec Spring	Un-Ebn-Ali Monument	Eynali Peak	Tarlan Spring	Ilan Uchan Valley	Average
Scientific	11	17.5	15	9	13	13.1
Aesthetic	15	16	19	14	16	16
Economic	9	15	18.5	9.5	15	13.4
Cultural	5	18.5	15	6	11	11.1
Managerial	6	17	18.5	11	9	12.3
Sum	46	84	86	49.5	64	
Average	9	16.8	17.2	9.9	12.8	
Total evaluation	46%	84%	86%	49.5%	64%	
Rating	5	2	1	4	3	

VI. RESULTS

Nowadays, tourists persue nature-based attractions which is unique in comparison with other ones, tourism could affect on most of tourism markets. Tabriz's Un-Ebn-Ali mountain is one of East Azarbaijan regions that in its cultural and historical attractions, there are unique geomorphologic phenomenon including Eynali peak, Un-Ebn-Ali Shrine, Ilan Uchan valley, Tarlan spring and Kahlec spring which were reviewed in the present research. In evaluation of geomorphosites value, The method of Comanescu was used in order to evaluate geomorphotouristic value of geomorphosites, and the result of selected geomorphosites evaluation showed that, aesthetic and scientific dimensions of these regions have dedicated high share and obtained lower score in comparison with cultural and managerial dimensions. According to obtained results, Eynali Peak and Kahlec spring have maximum and minimum points, 17.2 and 9 points among geomorphosites respectively. Also,

geomorphosites of Un-Ebn-Ali Shrine, Ilan Uchan valley and Tarlan spring are set in 2d-4th rating respectively with 16.8, 12.8 and 9.9 points.

It could be said that, high score of Eynali peak mostly is because of its beautiful landscape and high income as well as presence of amenities and short access routes. The most important feature of Un-Ebn-Ali shrine geomorphosite, which caused to take the second place with insignificant difference, is its religious-historical attractions. Ilan Ucahn valley, Kahlec spring and Tarlan spring couldn't attract more tourists if their required infrastructures, suitable publicity lacked and had a long access routes. The present research has evaluated the selected geotouristic phenomenon in order to arise questions in mind of readers and managers until to conduct essential actions in order to optimize utilization and have a suitable planning to be a demonstration for everyone that identifying phenomenon's nature and locations with geomorphotouristic potential is necessary.

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